



Russian Aggression of Georgia

ESCALATION OF CRISIS:

Detailed chronology of days before the war July-August 2008

- July 3** One month before Russia's invasion into Georgia, separatists **try to assassinate Dimitri Sanakoyev**, Head of the Temporary Administration of South Ossetia. A remote control road bomb exploded while Mr Sanakoyev's cortege was passing by. Five policemen accompanying Mr. Sanakoyev were wounded.
- Mr. Sanakoyev**—a former separatist fighter and defense minister in the separatist government - laid down his arms in 2006 to promote the peaceful re-integration of the region with the rest of the country under a broad autonomy arrangement. Mr. Sanakoyev was elected in democratic elections and administered up to 50% of the territory of the region.
- July 28** Separatists **open fire at joint peacekeeping forces and an OSCE observer group** moving towards the village of Chorbauli (Znauri district), thus disrupting monitoring activity.
- July 29** For the first time since last major hostilities, separatist militia begin intensively **shelling ethnically mixed villages under Georgian control**, including those of them where the Georgian peacekeepers held their check-points, with large-caliber artillery (greater than 82 mm) which is prohibited by existing agreements. This fact is formally acknowledged by the Head of "Peacekeeping Forces," Russian General Marat Kulakhmetov on August 4.
- Separatists **open fire also at a group of OSCE observers**, working with the joint peacekeeping forces, who are on their way to the village of Andzisi. 120 mm mortars and grenade launchers target a Georgian peacekeeping checkpoint near the village of Sarabuki.
- July 30** A Georgian police car, traveling between the villages of Kekhvi and Sveri, is fired upon from positions in the separatist-controlled village of Andzisi.
- July 31** The joint monitoring group of the JPKF and the OSCE mission observe **large-scale fortification works** undertaken by the separatists on two checkpoints between Tskhinvali and the village of Ergneti.
- August 1** A pickup truck carrying six police officers of MIA of Georgia is **hit by two remote-control explosive devices (IED)** on the Eredvi-Kheiti bypass road, close to the Government controlled enclave north of the city of Tskhinvali. Five policemen are severely wounded.
- Separatists **open fire with machine guns and grenade launchers** on the villages under Government control Kvemo Nikozi, Zemo Nikozi, Avnevi, Ergneti, and Eredvi. Attacks also are directed at Georgian police and peacekeepers checkpoints. In the village of Nuli, one person is wounded and several houses damaged. Georgian peacekeepers checkpoint in Sarabuki comes under attack. In the village of Ergneti, one person is wounded and two houses are damaged. Separatists reported, that six separatist militia are killed and 12 wounded after Georgian police open fire in response.
- August 2** **Six civilians and one servicemen of MIA of Georgia are injured** after separatists shell villages under Georgian control in the conflict zone overnight. The villages of Zemo Nikozi, Kvemo Nikozi, Nuli, Avnevi,

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Eredvi, and Ergneti come under intense large-caliber mortar fire the separatists. Georgian law enforcers initially shoot back in self-defense, but are soon ordered to cease fire in order not to escalate the situation.

August 3

The separatist government starts an **evacuation of the civilian population from the city of Tskhinvali and villages** under separatist control of the region. The evacuation continues for the next two days.

Russian media outlets report the large-scale **mobilization of volunteers across the Russian North Caucasus**, including pledges by Cossacks to deploy mercenary troops into Georgia.

August 4

General Kulakhmetov formally acknowledges the shelling of Georgian positions with illegal (large-caliber) artillery. On the evening of August 4, the medical and communication units of Russia's 58th Army enter South Ossetia, according to human intelligence received by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

Eleven artillery gunships (2S1-"Gvozdika") in the **possession of separatists are relocated** from Java to the villages of Andzisi, Dzari, and Tsru, close to Tskhinvali, according to intelligence provided to the MIA of Georgia.

The separatists announce the evacuation of the civilian population from Tskhinvali and from the separatist controlled villages of the region.

August 5

3 tanks and 2 military trucks with armed soldiers are reported moving towards the village of Avnevi. According to telephone intercepts, separatist internal affairs minister M. Mindzaev (formerly head of the General Staff of the Ministry of Interior of North Ossetia, Russia and former head of the Alfa Special Forces Group during Russia's operation in Beslan) orders a massive attack on—and the elimination of—the village Dvani (SigInt)*.

**Signal interceptions are cited and available upon request.*

Special Envoy Temur Yakobashvili visits the conflict zone Tskhinvali, meets Russian General Marat Kulakhmetov, to agree the next meeting for 7 August to defuse the situation.

A journalist of *Le Figaro*, Laure Mandeville later quotes a Russian soldier in Gori who says that Russian troops began moving from Shali in the Chechnya region of Russia towards Georgia on August 5.

August 6

Approximately 150 volunteers from the North Caucasus arrive in Tskhinvali as reported by local television; militants from other North Caucasian republics join separatist units.

Russian and local employees working on the military base in Tskhinvali are temporarily dismissed. Shops and other offices are closed, as reported on local television.

In the late afternoon at approximately 16:00, separatists open mortar fire from the villages of Pranevi, Ubiati, and Khetagurovo at ethnically mixed and Georgian-controlled villages of Eredvi, Prisi, Avnevi, Dvani, and Nuli. Khetagurovo was the main artillery base of the separatists. This attack continues until approximately 19:00.

A lull is then observed for one hour, with attacks resuming at 20:00 and lasting until late into the night. Georgian government forces fire back in order to defend their positions and the civilian population. As a result of intensive cross-fire during the night, two servicemen of the Georgian battalion of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces are injured. The separatist regime also claims several persons are injured on their side. Despite these provocative, targeted attacks on peaceful civilians and on Georgian police and peacekeeping forces, the Government of Georgia decides not to respond with heavy fire, in order not to escalate the conflict.